

Announcement of a second public comment period for a revised study to restore water quality to Laurel Fork in Pocahontas, Virginia

**PURPOSE OF NOTICE:** To seek public comment on the revised draft "Total Maximum Daily Load Development for Laurel Fork Fecal Bacteria, Dissolved Oxygen and General Standard(Benthic)" water quality improvement study by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy and the Department of Conservation and Recreation. Specifically, the revision addresses dissolved oxygen by establishing a 0 kg/year TMDL allocation for raw sewage into the stream.

**DESCRIPTION OF STUDY:** Laurel Fork, located in Tazewell County, Virginia, flows through the town of Pocahontas and joins into Bluestone River after it flows into West Virginia. The stream is impaired for failing to meet the *Aquatic Life Use* based on dissolved oxygen violations, violations of the general standard for aquatic organisms and failure to meet the *Recreational Use* because of fecal coliform and e.coli. bacteria violations.

The study reports the pollutant impairing the aquatic community and recommends a total maximum daily load, or TMDL, for sediment in terms of total suspended solids for Laurel Fork. Additionally, the study also presents the sources of bacteria contamination and a TMDL for bacteria for Laurel Fork. The revision explicitly establishes a TMDL for raw sewage to address violations of the dissolved oxygen standard. A TMDL is the total amount of a pollutant a water body can contain and still meet water quality standards. To restore water quality, contamination levels have to be reduced to the TMDL amount.

**HOW A DECISION IS MADE:** The development of a TMDL includes a public comment period, including public meetings. The draft document was revised after the final public meeting in response to EPA review and it is the revised document that is available for public review and comment. After public comments have been considered and addressed, DEQ will submit the revised TMDL report to the U.S.

Environmental Protection Agency for approval.

**HOW TO COMMENT:** DEQ accepts written comments by e-mail, fax or postal mail. Written comments should include the name, address and telephone number of the person commenting and be received by DEQ during the comment period, September 4 to October 2, 2006.

**TO REVIEW DRAFT TMDL REPORT:** The revised draft TMDL report on the impaired waters is available from the contact below or on the DEQ web site at [www.deq.virginia.gov/tmdl](http://www.deq.virginia.gov/tmdl).

**CONTACT FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

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